

So I asked Dr. Morris if we could trade cars on that particular Saturday night of the banquet. Well, he did not say "If I lend you my car, I'll have to do it for everybody." He didn't mention liability issues. He just said "come over, leave me your car" and asked me to return his car after the date.

So I borrowed the President's car, impressed my date, made my fellow club members envious and had a grand time cruising Abilene, Texas in the President's Lincoln town car. I even drove by the ever popular Mack Eplan's Drive In to show off.

When I returned Dr. Morris's car that evening, he was waiting for me at his kitchen table. He was reading the Bible and probably praying to the Almighty for the safety of his car. We exchanged car keys and that was that.

But Dr. Morris, like many at Abilene Christian displayed an example of the unique character of the university.

Now the 11th President, Royce Money is continuing to lead the school with a determination to follow the mission of the school: "To educate students for Christian Service and leadership throughout the world."

So congratulations to Abilene Christian University in celebrating its 100th year. And thanks for influencing and educating so many students to be a remarkable difference in our nation. The world is a better place because of that Texas school out on the plains of West Texas.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 17, 2005

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing legislation, along with Ranking Member EVANS and other distinguished Members of the Committee, will introduce legislation that will mandate the Department of Veterans' Affairs to empower the Department's Chief Information Officer with authority over resources, budget and personnel related to information technology for the Department.

Since coming to Congress in 1993, I have witnessed this Committee struggle with VA's inability to adequately manage its IT funding and IT modernization efforts.

While there have been significant improvements in VA's IT modernization efforts, the improvements have come at significant cost to our Veterans: \$600 million plus for a decade of VETSNET—the automated compensation and pension claims processing system that still has not been implemented in 10 years. \$342 million for CoreFLS—the failed financial management system. \$300 million for the HR Links—the failed automated personnel system. \$485 million annually to maintain VISTA, VA's 25-year-old medical information system.

This legislation, the "Department of Veterans Affairs Information Technology Management Improvement Act" will ensure accountability in VA IT spending, and reorganize VA's IT infrastructure to better serve our nation's veterans.

HONORING GEORGE HALE

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 17, 2005

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, Maine has a long tradition of honoring men and women who have made a positive impact on the community and the people around them. This is why I would like to recognize George Hale. George has spent his life working with and helping others.

George first began working with others when he was in the Navy. He would then go on to serve in Korea as a medic, working with the sick and wounded. A Cleveland native, George eventually found his way to Maine where he has had a distinguished 50 year career doing what he loves: broadcasting. During this career he has become an icon to a vast number of Mainers and he has become a legend as a high school basketball announcer. He has used his broadcasting skills to the benefit of others too. For the last 15 years George has helped host the Muscular Dystrophy Telethons on WABI TV. He has also done important work for the Maine Chapter of the March of Dimes and countless communities around Maine.

For these reasons George is being honored by the Maine Chapter of the March of Dimes tonight for a lifetime of achievement and involvement with the community. On behalf of the residents of Maine's Second Congressional District, and for myself personally, I would like to congratulate George Hale on this honor and also thank him for all the work he has done for the people of Maine.

THANKING FORMER GOVERNOR JAMES B. HUNT FOR HIS LEADERSHIP ON EDUCATION

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 17, 2005

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, James B. Hunt—the four-term Governor of North Carolina, is not only a model public servant, a proud democrat and a long-time dear friend, he is the rare visionary who actually knows how to implement his vision and get demonstrable results.

The "No Child Left Behind Act" was an historic bipartisan achievement for our Nation. And it was a signal accomplishment for President Bush and Members on both sides of the aisle in Congress.

But the fact is, governor Hunt was in the vanguard of the movement for education reform in the States and his hard work helped inspire the enactment of this important Federal law.

When it comes to education, Jim Hunt not only put North Carolina on the map, he has helped move the Tarheel State toward the top of the heap.

His smart start program—a public-private partnership in each of North Carolina's 100 counties—helps provide quality child care, health care and family support for each child who needs it.

The "Judy Centers" in Maryland—named for my late wife, who was a strong advocate of

early childhood education—provide many of the same services.

Jim Hunt helped set up North Carolina's primary reading program. He helped reduce class size, and create a dropout prevention program.

And, he established the State's school of science and mathematics, the Microelectronics Center of North Carolina, and the North Carolina Biotechnology Center.

He also helped put in place one of the most rigorous, approaches to measuring student performance, requiring mastery before promotion and graduation and providing assistance to turn around failing schools.

When it comes to education reform that gets results, no one in America has had a more profound impact than Jim Hunt.

He didn't just claim victory after signing these initiatives into law. He demanded—and received—results.

For example, The Rand Corporation reported that North Carolina Public Schools improved test scores more than any other State in the 1990s.

And, the 1997 national education goals report showed that North Carolina had the most impressive improvements toward reaching educational goals outlined by the panel, and made significant progress in science and math.

But Governor Hunt's contributions have been felt far beyond the borders of North Carolina.

They have been felt throughout the Nation.

As the founding chair of the national board for professional teaching standards, Jim Hunt has been a driving force in improving student achievement by raising teaching standards.

Quite simply, the national board helps teachers improve their skills, so that they can better serve their students.

Governor Hunt has always recognized that the key to a first-rate education is first-rate teaching.

And, through the national board he has helped raise the bar, striving to give professional educators the respect and training that they deserve.

Finally, let me say that Jim Hunt has always understood and focused on the nexus between educational achievement and economic success.

Today, figures from across the political spectrum—Bill Clinton, Newt Gingrich, Bill Gates and the U.S. Chamber—recognize and are talking about that nexus.

"We are living in a world," said President Clinton, "Where what you can earn is a function of what you can learn."

This issue, the centrality of education and knowledge in today's global economy, unites all of us.

And Jim Hunt has recognized that for more than 25 years.

A few years ago, the Raleigh News and Observer stated that, "Jim Hunt served his State with practical accomplishment and with forceful leadership in times of crisis. Of that, he, and we, can be proud."

Governor Hunt is a trailblazer who has lit the path to personal fulfillment and professional accomplishment for literally thousands of North Carolinians and men and women all across this Nation.

His insight has been invaluable. His determination has been essential. And his leadership has been practical, productive and profound.